

Abstract 464

TITLE: Factors Related to HIV Risk in Transgendered People

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OBJECTIVE: To assess HIV-related knowledge, attitudes, and risk behaviors in a sample of transgendered people. Transgendered people are at increased risk of HIV infection from such sources as high-risk sex partners; sex for pay; and needle sharing for drugs, hormones and silicone injections. However, very little research specifically targets transgendered people, and data on this population from other sources is often obscured by data collection forms that allow for only two genders.

METHOD: An extensive face-to-face interview assessing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to HIV was conducted with a convenience sample of transgendered people recruited from various counties in California by community health organizations.

RESULTS: Among those who had been tested for HIV antibody, the reported rate of infection was very high. Of the 48.2% who had been tested, 19.6% reported positive test results, and an additional 3.6% refused to divulge their results. However, more than half (52.4%) assessed their risk for HIV as "less than most people's." Self-reported behavioral risk factors included needle sharing for hormone injections (4.3%), multiple partners in the previous 6 months (42%), and sex for pay (24.2%). Almost a quarter (23.7%) reported one or more "high risk" partners, including males who had sex with males (10.3%), injection drug users (16.4%), and HIV partners (5.2%).

DISCUSSION: Although the extent to which this sample is representative of all transgendered people is unknown, it clearly represents a group at high risk for HIV. The high prevalence of HIV infection coupled with the risk factor profile are revealing findings for more targeted interventions for transgendered people.

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